

A eulogy by  
Leo Strauss



1882-1955

KURT  
**RIEZLER**

# X

## KURT RIEZLER

(1882-1955)

The Graduate Faculty has honored me with the request to speak in its General Seminar about the thought of our friend, the late Kurt Riezler. I feel with equal strength the obligation to comply with that request and my inability to comply with it sufficiently. I met Riezler for the first time in 1938, in this country, in this very building, when he was already well in his fifties and had already completed a distinguished career. And although two of my friends had spoken to me about him in terms of high regard, I had never read a line of his. It took him and me a number of years until a somewhat complicated relationship of colleagues grew into a simple and firm friendship. After I had left for Chicago in 1949, we met only at long intervals. During the last two years of his life, we did not see each other at all and we exchanged only a few letters. While he was alive, I had never found the time to read those of his writings which were published prior to 1941, with the exception of his *Parmenides*. During the last two months, I have read most of these writings, but I was unable to read them with the care which they deserve.

But I am embarrassed not only by my lack of knowledge.

Riezler was not only a thinker and writer. He was equally a man of action. He was, above all, a human being of rare breadth and depth. To speak adequately in his honor, one would have to do more than to analyze his thought. One would also have to narrate his actions and to bring to light and to life the man himself. I have never deplored as much as on the present occasion that I lack the gifts of narrative and of characterization.

Riezler represented to me, more than anyone else among my acquaintances, the virtue of humanity. I believe he was formed by Goethe more than by any other master. His interests and sympathies extended to all fields of worthy human endeavour. He could easily have become an outstanding scholar in a great variety of fields, but he preferred to be a truly educated man rather than to be a specialist. The term "professor" does not designate anything of him, but the term "gentleman" does. The activity of his mind had the character of noble and serious employment of leisure, not of harried labor. And his wide ranging interests and sympathies were never divorced from his sense of human responsibility. Nothing human was alien to him unless we reckon the sordid, the mean, the vulgar and the fanatical among the human. He could become angry but he never felt moral indignation. He could despise causes and even human beings but his contempt was never cut off from pity. He was a man of great warmth and tenderness but he was utterly unsentimental. He disliked words like duty and fatherland but he was singularly free from levity and he retained until his end a certain Bavarian sturdiness that had become transfigured into an unpretentious strength and greatness of soul. In his long and varied career he could not help hurting other human beings but there was no trace of cruelty in him. He had strong likes and dislikes but they bore no relation to self interest or vanity. He was sometimes unjust but he never was petty. In company he was altogether pleasant: neither heavy or moody nor frivolous or half absent. He was a man of rare intelligence but only a crude man could call him an intellectual. His speech was in perfect harmony with his being: direct, weighty, of a manly grace, and free from every kind of the spurious or affected. He did not derive pleasure from winning arguments. When I try to see vividly what distinguishes wisdom from cleverness, I think of Riezler. His political judgment

was not misguided by passion or by system or by prejudice: in the few cases where I believed at the time that he was wrong, his judgment was vindicated by what happened or what transpired afterwards. All important points which were made after the Second World War on the basis of more or less secret information by Chester Wilnot, were made during that war on the basis of information accessible to everyone by Riezler.

Not having been as unpolitical in his youth as the young Thomas Mann, he was protected against ever becoming as simplistically political as the middle aged and old Thomas Mann. I encountered the young Riezler for the first time some weeks ago when I read his *Grundzuege der Weltpolitik in der Gegenwart* (Outlines of Contemporary World Politics) which he published under the pseudonym of J. J. Ruedorffer. For the proper understanding of the book one must bear in mind the fact that it was published shortly before the outbreak of the First World War by an influential official of imperial Germany. Riezler attempted to clarify the character which foreign politics had taken on during the long period of peace among the great European powers after 1871. He traced that character to the nature of foreign politics on the one hand, and the particular conditions of the period on the other. The most massive political fact was the conflict among nations: each nation concerned with self preservation and expansion, and driven by unlimited selfishness. But national conflict was not the fundamental conflict. Nationalism was challenged by cosmopolitanism. Both nationalist and cosmopolitan tendencies were growing in force, and so was their irreconcilable hostility. Riezler faced the question whether peace among nations or war among nations is according to nature. He saw this alternative: either the nation is the highest form of human association, with the consequence that there is "eternal, absolute enmity" among the nations, friendship among nations being enmity postponed or common enmity to other nations, or else humankind as a whole stands above the nations assigning them their role and place and legitimately limiting their aspirations. He decided without hesitation in favor of nationalism. The conflict of ideas, he argued, reflects the conflict of living forces; the question of the truth of an idea is therefore the question of its power. Now we only have to look around us in order to realize that the thoughts and

sentiments of the nations are dominated by the national idea not by the cosmopolitan idea. And history teaches us that while nationalism and the nation state are of fairly recent origin, their earlier equivalents were always more powerful than cosmopolitanism. Riezler was not impressed by the cosmopolitan professions of faith of which there was no scarcity. He was certain that if these professions were put to the test, even the socialist workers would go with their countries. Nor was he impressed by the belief that if the nations only knew each other better by seeing more of each other, enmity among them would cease: increase of acquaintance does not necessarily improve feeling. But the power of nationalism, i.e., its power in the present and the past, was not the only reason why Riezler preferred it to its opposite. He thought that nationalism stands for something more noble than cosmopolitanism, i.e., than that cosmopolitanism which is politically relevant. The politically relevant cosmopolitanism was supported by the modern economic-technological-scientific development. But this development did not strengthen, it rather weakened, the human in man. It increased man's power but not his wisdom. One could see with special clarity in Germany that this development was accompanied by a decay of the spirit, of taste, of the mind. It compelled men to become ever more specialistic, and at the same time it tempted them with a sham universality by exciting all kinds of curiosities and stimulating all kinds of interests. It thus made ever more difficult concentration on the few things on which man's wholeness entirely depends. Riezler found the intellectual root of the politically relevant cosmopolitanism in what he called the modern ideal. He discerned in that ideal three elements. The first was the belief that human life as such, i.e., independently of the kind of life one leads, is an absolute good. The second, derivative from the first, was universal and unqualified compassion or humanitarianism. And the third was "materialism," i.e., an overriding concern with pleasure and unwillingness or inability to dedicate one's life to ideals. This analysis is not very much liked today but it is historically correct. To see how it leads on to the defense of nationalism, we shall express Riezler's thought as follows. The modern ideal does not leave room for reverence, the matrix of human nobility. Reverence is primarily, i.e., for most men at all times and for all men most of the time,

reverence for one's heritage, for tradition. But traditions are essentially particularistic, and therefore akin to nationalism rather than to cosmopolitanism.

It would appear then that Riezler's decision in favor of nationalism rested entirely upon experience, on the experience of the power of nationalism in the present and in the past, and the experience of the low character of actual cosmopolitanism. One might say that that decision did not do justice to the possible future, the promise, the ideal of cosmopolitanism. This neglect of the future is the more remarkable since Riezler taught at the same time that the nation is never what it is actually but that it is always what it is, by virtue of its future. The difficulty is hardly overcome by what Riezler suggests regarding the essence of the nation. According to him, both the individual man and the nation are living beings, genuine wholes. But whereas the individual necessarily dies, there is no necessity for the death of nations; nations can live in the hope of eternal life, whereas the individuals cannot. Therefore the individual partakes of eternity only through his nation, and hence his nation is the only true way for him. Riezler quotes in this context the following words of a character in Dostoievski's *Possessed*: each nation has its own god and its own conception of good and evil; there is no God for all nations, and no universally valid conception of good and evil. I regard this as unsatisfactory—if for no other reason than that, as Riezler himself admitted, there may be an essential necessity for the death of nations as of beings which have come into being. It is worthy of note that Riezler did not attempt to establish the metaphysical dignity of the nation by having recourse to the connection between thought and language. There were probably two reasons for this. In the first place, he seems to have thought that language is not the matrix of the truth towards which thought is directed. And besides, he saw too clearly that there is no necessary connection between the community created by the unity of language and the political community, as is shown by the modern examples of Switzerland on the one hand and of the United States and Great Britain on the other. One may wonder whether there is another alternative to cosmopolitanism than the political philosophy of Plato and of Aristotle who taught that the natural political community is, not the nation, but the

city; the nation would thus appear as a half-way house between the polis and the cosmopolis, and any attempt to bring out the truth underlying nationalism, but not adequately expressed by nationalism, would have to be guided by the insight embodied in the classical preference for the polis over against cosmopolis. However this may be, Riezler later on abandoned the nationalism of his youth, and he studied with ever increasing devotion the *Republic* of Plato.

While nationalism is as such theoretically unsatisfactory, it may still supply us with the best available framework for understanding the present political situation and for enlightening political action within a world that is dominated for all the foreseeable future by nationalism. Nationalism is certainly superior for these purposes, not only to the constructs of the legalists, but likewise to a certain sociology which is guided by the notions of "society" and "growth." For that sociology is apt to make us forget two things which the nationalist never forgets. Societies are still, and for the foreseeable future, national or imperial societies, closed off from other societies by unmistakable and formidable frontiers which have been established by wars rather than by other means; and if societies "grow" there is no guarantee whatsoever that they will not take away the light of the sun from others: he who preaches "growth" without thinking of the term of growth, of the peak beyond which there cannot be growth, preaches war.

Riezler too spoke of the nation as of a being that, as long as it is healthy, always desires to grow. But he was far from concealing the fact that growth is most visibly growth in size, expansion: as long as it is healthy, the nation has a tendency toward empire, toward world rule. Yet, he held, extensive growth leads to disastrous hollowness if it is not accompanied and prepared by growth in intensity, depth, inwardness and consciousness, or in "culture." He opposed therefore the nationalists proper, i.e., those who understood by growth nothing but expansion or who overestimated "the power of force" and underestimated the power of ideas. This was not the only point at which he left the way taken by the official Germany of that time. Nationalism, as he understood it, deprived the antagonism of monarchism and republicanism of its former importance, and therefore it made him indifferent to the German-Prussian monarchy. His nationalism was

fundamentally republican and at least on the verge of becoming soberly democratic. The imperialism which he favored was a farsighted, enlightened, sober, patient imperialism, an imperialism fashioned on the British model. Looking in this spirit at the political scene, he reached the conclusion that the national interest of Germany, as well as the national interests of all the other great European powers, required for the foreseeable future the preservation of peace, and he tried to enlighten his fellow citizens and especially his superiors about the possibilities of avoiding that war which we now call the First World War. He paid special attention to the fact that there was still sufficient room for the parallel, not conflicting, expansion of the white race in Asia and Africa. He even visualized the possibility that the end of the period of parallel expansion might coincide with the emergence of a state of things in which war would have become altogether impracticable because all great powers would have to lose much more from war than they could possibly gain from it. He saw the greatest danger to peace not in the big armaments and in the system of alliances as such, for he thought that by making calculations of victory extremely difficult, they would incline calculating statesmen towards a policy of caution, but rather in the weakness of the governments of the countries in which there were strong nationalist movements, and in the replacement of "the system of slowly shifting alliances . . . by an inflexible system of two camps" (the Triple Alliance and the Entente). War could be avoided in the foreseeable future if the possibility of maneuver remained open, and that possibility could be kept open provided the national interest, and not prestige or demagoguery, determined the handling of foreign affairs. Riezler returned to these problems forty years later in his Walgreen Lectures, *Political Decisions in the Modern Mass Society of the Industrial Age*. In comparing the statements made in 1953 with those made in 1913, I am struck by the similarity of approach. I seem to observe a slight shift of emphasis: the experience of forty years seems to have given Riezler greater clarity about the source of the weakness of modern non-tyrannical governments *vis-à-vis* demagoguery.

Nationalism or imperialism, as Riezler defended it, reminds at more than one point of the political views of Max Weber. The fundamental difference between Riezler and Weber consists in



this: the Christian teaching regarding war and peace, more precisely, the Sermon on the Mount, created less of a problem for Riezler than it did for Weber. Whether this difference is connected with the fact that Riezler came from a Catholic family and Weber from a Protestant family, I am unable to say.

It is not possible to summarize Riezler's analysis of the world political situation of 1913. But it ought to be said that that clear and broad analysis is an excellent model from which students of international relations could learn an important part of their craft. If I had to compile a Reader in International Relations, I would incorporate into it Riezler's analysis. It reminded me of Burke's analysis of the European situation in 1791 in his *Thoughts on French Affairs*.

The young Riezler was a nationalist politically. He was not a nationalist *tout court*. He distinguished genuine cosmopolitanism from spurious and superficial cosmopolitanism, and he discerned the root of the former in the depth of the individual. The individual is part of his nation, but he is not merely part of his nation: "he has his own task, his own goal, and his own value." The nation is then not the only way to eternity. Only individuals, and not nations, can engage in the quest for truth, and this quest unites individuals belonging to different nations. The genius, while being the son of a nation, belongs to mankind. To quote from an essay which Riezler published thirty years later, "the voluntary and cheerful outcast who refuses to conform but bears no grudge . . . is the salt and pepper of any society, and its most important member, though he does not regard himself as a member. He is the spur of the horse that likes to fall asleep." But this genuine cosmopolitanism does not affect the fundamental relation among the nations.

Imperial Germany went down in defeat and collapsed. At that time people began to talk of the decline of the West. During the Weimar Republic Riezler published, as far as I know, only one writing which could be called political, *Ueber Gebundenheit und Freiheit des gegenwaertigen Zeitalters* (On Fatality and Freedom in the Present Age, 1929). Its theme is the future of western man. Despite the great differences of the prospect and of the subject matter, the two political writings composed by Riezler in Germany have something in common: in both cases Riezler opposes "the prophets of gloom" and attempts to show that there is hope if sanity

prevails. In fact insanity prevailed again. Led politically by Hitler and intellectually by Heidegger, Germany entered the Third Reich. Riezler had to leave Germany. The Third Reich and its biggest achievement, the Second World War, confirmed the prophecy of the decline of Europe. During the Cold War which follows the Second World War, Riezler was compelled to write his third and last political work, his Walgreen Lectures. The message remained unaltered: there is hope for western man, the western world is not doomed, if sanity will reassert itself as it is still able to do. For there is a difference which is not negligible between stigmatizing the expression of sanity as "controversial" and completely suppressing it.

Political analyses were the foreground, the by no means negligible foreground, of Riezler's philosophical studies. His analysis of the world political situation in 1913 was based on the assumption that political life cannot be understood with the means of science, of natural science. He assumed a dualism of methods, of the methods of natural science and those of historical understanding. He traced the dualism of methods to what one may call a metaphysical dualism. He developed his philosophical premisses in *Die Erforderlichkeit des Unmöglichen, Prolegomena zu einer Theorie der Politik* (On the Indispensable Character of the Impossible, Preface to a Theory of Politics) which he published at about the same time as the *Grundzüge*. Since that book was not accessible to me, I turn to his second philosophical book, *Gestalt und Gesetz, Entwurf einer Metaphysik der Freiheit* (Form and Law, Project of a Metaphysics of Freedom) published in 1924. That book is devoted to the problem posed by metaphysical dualism.

*Gestalt und Gesetz* is a document of the fermentation characteristic of German thought during the first decade after the First World War. There was a strong dissatisfaction with the established academic positions and a groping for a new way of thinking, i.e., a feeling that a return from those academic positions to the great epoch of German thought (the epoch from Kant to Hegel) would not suffice. There was awareness of the general direction in which, as was believed, one had to move but there was no clarity and certainty about the way. One would discern two disparate intellectual sources of the prevailing dissatisfaction and unrest: Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. There existed at the end of the First World War three significant academic positions, which I shall enumerate

in the order of their emergence: the neo-Kantianism of the school of Marburg, Dilthey's philosophy of life, and phenomenology. It is somewhat surprising that while Riezler's aspirations had least in common with the tenets or tendencies of the school of Marburg, he was more impressed by it than by its rivals. From conversations with Riezler I gathered the following reason: the founder of the school of Marburg, Hermann Cohen, surpassed all other German professors of philosophy of the period between 1871 and 1925 by the fire and power of his soul. Passion and power of the originator of a doctrine do not establish the truth of a doctrine, but they were the indispensable conditions for Riezler's paying serious and sustained attention to a doctrine. As regards the transacademic forces which agitated the German mind, we note that Riezler was not touched at all by Kierkegaard, but was touched deeply by Nietzsche.

In the book under consideration, Riezler starts with accepting a fundamental dualism which he expresses to begin with as Law and Form, the inorganic and the living, nature and mind, necessity and freedom. He rejects the view that one of the two opposites can be reduced to, or deduced from, the other: mind cannot be understood as a product or effect of nature, nor can nature be understood as a derivative from mind. He likewise rejects the view that the fundamental dualism can be conceived as a mere dualism of points of view: the unity of man who partakes of both nature and its opposite, demands a single point of view from which he in his unity can be grasped. For fundamentally the same reason one cannot solve the difficulty by ascribing one of the two opposites to the phenomenal world and the other to the Thing-in-itself: both opposites belong to one and the same world. What is required is then not merely a theory of knowledge or even a critique of the human mind, but a metaphysics whose theme is the whole of the one world as of a world characterized by a fundamental dualism. But, Riezler adds, this metaphysics must be critical. Critical metaphysics, in contradistinction to the obsolete ontological metaphysics, is based on the Kantian insight that things *qua* things depend on human knowledge, are constituted by human knowledge, or, in other words, that the whole conceived of as a totality of things cannot exist. "The central question" of metaphysics is therefore "the question of the subject, the Ego, the soul, or the

monad." Riezler does not speak here of reason or mind; he conceives of reason or mind as part of the subject or the soul. In other words, the spontaneity which is characteristic of the subject, is spontaneity not only of reason or understanding, as Kant had taught, but of the senses as well. This does not mean however that the subject is man. It is merely due to human pride that men regard man as superior in dignity to plants and to brutes. Nor is the subject God. However this may be, critical metaphysics, being essentially concerned with the subject or the soul, is "metaphysics of freedom."

If critical metaphysics is metaphysics of freedom, necessity must be understood as derivative from freedom: the dualism of freedom and necessity reveals itself as only provisional. Only in the peripheral perspective of man does a broader freedom appear as necessity. Necessity, fatality, determinacy is in truth nothing other than the mutual limitation of free, creative powers and the dependence of creative powers on their own creations. Similarly, other dualisms prove to be merely provisional. Thus one may receive the impression that Riezler simply suppresses the dualism from which he started.

No pair of opposites is stressed more strongly in *Gestalt und Gesetz* than that of Law and Form: the mathematical formula of the scientific law and its ancestor, the Platonic-Aristotelian idea or form, or rather general rules and the concrete gestalt. And yet this dualism too proves to be provisional. This does not mean that the extensive discussion which Riezler devotes to it is superfluous. The opposition of Law and Form, the movement from Law to Form, is indispensable if the true character of reality is to be understood. Thinking in terms of Law is inevitable for man but it is the obstacle *par excellence* to the understanding of reality. Yet one must also beware of the equally faulty opposite extreme which is that of conceiving of reality as a blind, creative will that lacks direction, meaning or a goal. The mean between those faulty extremes, Law and Will, is Form. It is only by the analysis of Form that Riezler discovers the pair of fundamental opposites and therewith, not indeed their reconciliation, but their essential inseparability. Form is generated by a process which has no other meaning than to generate forms, ever higher forms. This process does not precede form: the forming is always itself formed. Form is what it is by its own formative action. Every form, everything that is,

points beyond itself, tends beyond itself. It is less than it ought to be. Reality is in between Is and Ought. The fundamental and eternal antinomy of the Is and the Ought constitutes reality. The world is eternal disharmony, striving, longing, endeavour, *eros*, and therefore eternal life. It strives for the infinite, permanent and perfect and achieves only the finite, transitory and imperfect. It is eternally imperfect: everything good is only by virtue of some evil; love is inseparable from hatred, joy from pain; every achievement is bought at the price of some failure; every coming into being is a perishing. There is no possibility of redemption by human or divine means: not even Heaven itself can be redeemed. But precisely for this reason, the world is eternally alive. In theological language, God is not, He is eternally becoming. Reality thus understood must consist of infinitely many forms, formative forms, subjects, or mortal monads, each of them qualitatively different from all others or unique. These monads are not isolated from each other. Each monad is, as it were, within others and by virtue of its unique striving in conflict with the others: reality is the eternal conflict of infinitely many monads. There is no harmony among them since there does not exist the one uncreated central monad. Every monad is the center, and therefore every monad is peripheral. Every monad longs for the impossible center; this longing is life. Every monad has its own perspective: reality is something different for every monad. Reality is an infinite process which gives rise to, or rather consists of, an infinite number of processes, i.e., of formation of forms, and which reveals itself only in infinitely many incompatible perspectives. In this infinity, everything is means and everything is end: reality is not a hierarchic order.

But does this "eternal relativity" not destroy the unity of the world? Does it not lead to the consequence that nothing is true and everything is permitted? Riezler denies this. There remains something firm and stable, there remains a unity, but this one and unchangeable cannot be found in any "absolute suchness" or in any form, to say nothing of number or law. The unity of the world is the unity of fate, i.e., of the fate of each of its parts: birth and death, striving and failure, and so on. In moving from neo-Kantianism to his critical metaphysics, from Law to Form and to the ground of Form, Riezler moved from the unity of method to the unity of fate.

From all that has been said, it follows that critical metaphysics

is distinguished from the ontological metaphysics of the past, not only by its theme, but by its mode as well. It is not theoretical. It does not imply that one leaves the world of change for the permanent or eternal. Philosophy as critical metaphysics is aware of the limitation of philosophy. There is a disproportion between the breadth of the task of philosophy (to grasp the whole, the whole process) and the narrowness of its means (concepts). Philosophy needs concepts and must break through its concepts. The task of philosophy is unfinishable. The fate of philosophy is tragic—as tragic as the fate of every other manifestation of life. Thus while philosophy is unable to grasp the whole by its concepts, it copies or represents the whole by its fate: for the whole is that unity which is the fate of every part of the whole. The eternal antinomy at the bottom of everything cannot be looked at in detachment; it discloses its meaning only if it is experienced, i.e., if it is experienced in the anguish of the radically isolated individual, and if that experience culminates in an ultimate “And in spite of it”; philosophy means honorably to come to grief, obstinately to refuse the delusion of redemption, to say yes to, or to love, this world as the only world. In this way and only in this way does it appear that not everything is permitted.

The phenomena which led Riezler from Law to Form were the living beings and the works of art. But those phenomena are not sufficient to support his speculations about the ground of reality. In these speculations he was guided by what he regarded as the phenomenon of History: History as the creation of ever new forms, of ever higher forms. His metaphysics is an attempt to understand nature after the analogy of History. Accordingly he asserts that time, and not space, belongs to the core of reality, nay, is the core of reality: “time is the longing of the deity for itself.”

It is only with a certain difficulty that I recognize in *Gestalt und Gesetz* the Riezler I knew. The differences between *Gestalt und Gesetz* and his later books may be traced to a single cause: his later thought was shaped by both the influence of Heidegger and the reaction to him. Not indeed Riezler's deepest tendency, but the way in which he expressed it or did not express it, was decisively affected by Heidegger.

It would be an understatement to say that Heidegger was the greatest contemporary power which Riezler ever encountered.

One has to go back to Hegel until one finds another professor of philosophy who affected in a comparable manner the thought of Germany, nay, of Europe. But Hegel had some contemporaries whose power equalled his or at any rate whom one could compare to him without being manifestly foolish. Heidegger surpasses all his contemporaries by far. This could be seen long before he became known to the general public. As soon as he appeared on the scene, he stood in its center and he began to dominate it. His domination grew almost continuously in extent and in intensity. He gave adequate expression to the prevailing unrest and dissatisfaction because he had clarity and certainty, if not about the whole way, at least about the first and decisive steps. The fermentation or the tempest gradually ceased. Eventually a state has been reached which the outsider is inclined to describe as paralysis of the critical faculties; philosophizing seems to have been transformed into listening with reverence to the incipient *mythoi* of Heidegger:

Tum, pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum quem  
Conspexere, silent arrectisque auribus adstant.

Riezler delivered his speech on *Gebundenheit und Freiheit des gegenwaertigen Zeitalters* in Davos before the same audience which immediately before had listened to a debate between Heidegger and Cassirer. Riezler took the side of Heidegger without any hesitation. There was no alternative. Mere sensitivity to greatness would have dictated Riezler's choice. Cassirer represented the established academic position. He was a distinguished professor of philosophy but he was no philosopher. He was erudite but he had no passion. He was a clear writer but his clarity and placidity were not equalled by his sensitivity to the problems. Having been a disciple of Hermann Cohen he had transformed Cohen's philosophic system, the very center of which was ethics, into a philosophy of symbolic forms in which ethics had silently disappeared. Heidegger on the other hand explicitly denies the possibility of ethics because he feels that there is a revolting disproportion between the idea of ethics and those phenomena which ethics pretended to articulate.

In *Gestalt und Gesetz*, we recall, Riezler had found the unity of the world, not in any "suchness" which as such would be accessible to a detached view, but in the fate of each of its parts, which

fate was said to disclose itself only by being experienced in the anguish of the radically isolated individual; the parts of the whole were conceived of as mortal monads. One could say that Riezler had identified "the substance" with the fate, the specific finiteness, of the mortal monad. He thus was not unprepared for Heidegger's thesis according to which "the substance" is *Existenz*. Yet Riezler's mortal monad was not man in particular but any living being, i.e., any being, though man and man alone had supplied him with the clue to the other beings: he had attempted to understand the whole after the likeness of man or of History. What he learned from Heidegger was in the first place that such an attempt presupposes the clarification of what man is. But, as Riezler had stressed, the question of the What or of suchness does not go to the root; the fundamental question must concern the fate of man, or, as Heidegger said, his *esse*, his *Existenz*. Heidegger's analysis of *Existenz* is meant to be the fundamental ontology, i.e., "the first philosophy," for philosophy is nothing other than ontology. Riezler learned from Heidegger above all that philosophy is ontology. In *Gestalt und Gesetz* he had suggested that everything comes into being and perishes, or that nothing "is," but also that only coming into being and perishing "is." He thus had touched upon the ontological problem but at the same time he had rejected ontology as obsolete. In his later writings however he identifies philosophy with ontology. One can express Heidegger's notion of ontology most simply by using Platonic expressions in an un-Platonic sense. Ontology is concerned, not with beings, but with that which we mean whenever we say of anything that it "is," or with that by virtue of which beings are, or with that through partaking of which beings are and are said to be; this—*esse* as distinguished from *entia*—as the ground of all beings is not a being but beyond being and beingness. The distinction between *esse* and *entia* enabled Riezler to articulate what in fact had been the most fundamental distinction used in *Gestalt und Gesetz*: the distinction between fate which can never be a thing or an object and everything else which is or can become a thing or an object.

The first book which Riezler composed on this basis is his *Parmenides* (1934), the only book of his which is devoted to a subject belonging to the history of philosophy. The historical problem, the problem of the meaning of Parmenides' poem, was for



Riezler at one with the most important "systematic" problem. The ontological problem is to begin with not intelligible to us because we are the heirs to a tradition of many centuries which mistook the ontological problem (the problem of *esse*) for the cosmological problem (the problem of the totality of *entia*) or the theological problem (the problem of the highest *ens*) and which in its modern part had gradually lost the last vestige of memory of the ontological problem. All our habits of thinking, all the concepts that are at our disposal stem in the best case from the time in which the ontological problem had begun to be overlaid or to be superseded by the cosmological or the theological problem. The ontological problem appears clearly and purely only in the beginning of western thought, and in particular in Parmenides. To understand the ontological problem means then to liberate oneself from the shackles of a tradition which conceals the problem or to recover the origin of our tradition: the "systematic" problem is inseparable from the historical problem. In this Riezler follows Heidegger for whom the elaboration of the ontological problem is inseparable from the "De-struktion" of the philosophic tradition. Riezler deviates from Heidegger in a decisive point. Heidegger's return to the origin of western thought serves the purpose of overcoming the limitations of western thought and in particular of Greek thought. But Riezler held that early Greek ontology is the true and final foundation of ontology. According to Heidegger the essential limitation of Greek ontology shows itself in the fact that the Greeks understood by "to be" "to be present or near." Riezler however accepts the Greek view according to which only "to be present" is "to be truly." In his copy of the first edition of Diels's *Vorsokratiker*, he wrote the following words on the margin of the beginning of Parmenides' fragments: "Gegen dieses verstaubte Gold der Philosophie ist alles seit hunderterten von Jahren nur vergoldeter Staub." ("Compared with this gold of philosophy which is covered by dust, everything else for centuries has been only dust covered by gold.") And at the end of his *Parmenides* he indicates his belief that among all post-Greek thinkers only Nietzsche would have been favored by Parmenides with an intimation of the right way: the same does not have to return eternally, for it is always wholly present.

It is necessary to explain briefly what Riezler understood by ontology. The most fundamental presupposition of all thought is

what one may call the decision as to what it means "to be." For instance, modern science may be said to identify "to be" with "to be observable by everyone" or "to be a possible object" or "to belong to the spatial-temporal order." "To be" thus understood is relative to the observer, to any observer, to the anonymous observer. But we divine somehow that "to be" means above all "to be in itself" and not merely "to be relative . . .": "to be" means, above all and primarily, to be a subject and not an object. The anonymous observer would then "be" in a more fundamental sense than any or all of his objects. Furthermore, the anonymous observer "is" not according to that meaning of "to be" which is authoritative for him: we can observe only this or that observer who is always much more than the anonymous observer. The anonymous observer and everything that "is" only relative to him is an abstraction, and we divine somehow that "to be" means primarily "to be concrete." "To be concrete" means not merely to be a particular being but likewise to belong to a particular whole, to a particular dynamic context: a particular being divorced from its particular dynamic context is an abstraction. Every real observer belongs to such a dynamic context. In proportion as he leaves that context, as he looks at it from without, he misses the concrete: true reality is "reality seen from the inside." This implies that in order to be truly real, reality must be "seen": if there are no human beings there cannot be concreteness. However this may be, if "to be" means "to be concrete," the fundamental question cannot concern this or that concrete someone or something, nor the totality of concrete someones and somethings in their concrete contexts, but concreteness as such. More generally and more cautiously, the fundamental question concerns not this or that being, nor the totality of beings, but beingness. Beingness is distinguished from the beings as the One from the Many. This does not mean that beingness is the transcendent God whereas the beings are His creatures in this world: beingness is nothing but the ground of the this-worldliness of everything in this world; the One is only in the Many; beingness is not without beings and *vice versa*. Nor is beingness related to the beings as the whole to the parts. Beingness is the one fate, the one order, the one law of all beings, although we have access to beingness only in the case of man. The unity of beingness does not mean simplicity, but unity of the different: beingness has a complex

articulation; it is a whole consisting of a variety of elements or "powers," each of which demands the others and is co-present in them; it is a texture in which each thread entails all others or in which the whole inheres in each thread. It is this whole texture by virtue of which any being "is." Whereas all beings come into being and perish, beingness is unchangeable, eternal, timeless. At the same time however beingness is said to be "occurrence": it is for this reason that Riezler prefers to use the verb *esse* rather than the noun "beingness."

In the light of ontology thus understood Riezler approaches the fragments of Parmenides' poem. It would be more accurate to say that having become aware of the ontological problem Riezler turned to Parmenides and that his ontology was partly shaped by what he learned from Parmenides. Parmenides' poem consists of two parts, the first devoted to the truth, the second to opinion. According to the traditional or vulgar interpretation, Parmenides taught in the first part that being is one and therefore that manyness and change do not exist or are mere appearance or opinion; even knowledge and being must be identical; in the second part he presents the general opinion of mankind, according to which manyness and change exist, by deducing that opinion from its false principle; that false principle is that being is not one but two (say, light and darkness); the world of appearance can be understood as a mixture of light and darkness, as Parmenides shows by presenting the genesis of the many and changing things out of that mixture. Riezler, who continues the way of interpretation that was opened by Karl Reinhardt, contends that Parmenides denies manyness and change not to the beings but to beingness; opinion consists, not in admitting manyness and change, but in being blind to the unchangeable unity which underlies and makes possible manyness and change; the unity of beingness is a unity of opposites; opinion consists in divorcing the opposites completely from each other or in being blind to the co-presence of one of the opposites in the other; opinion is aware only of that quality which is sensually perceived at a given moment—it is unaware of the opposite quality which is co-present but not sensually perceived at that moment: opinion identifies the truth with what is sensually perceived; opinion is surrender to sense perception. Hence, the fundamental error of opinion does not consist in assuming the two principles, Light and Darkness: both these principles and every-

thing which flows from them belong to truth, and not to opinion. Accordingly, the second part of Parmenides' poem does not so much "systematize" opinion as supply the true explanation of opinion. In particular, one fragment of the second part (Fr. 16), rightly understood, gives us the decisive information, supplied nowhere in the first part, about the true relation of truth and opinion.

Riezler's interpretation is a high point in the modern study of Parmenides. One can hardly go further in the direction which he has followed, as long as one remains concerned with what Parmenides himself taught, as distinguished from what his poem may convey without his necessarily being aware of it. And Riezler has disposed of the vulgar interpretation more completely than others have done. The question that remains is whether the vulgar interpretation, which saw only the gulf separating the two parts of the poem, did not see therewith something which is now in danger of being overlooked. Riezler himself speaks of the "imagery" of the second part. The second part does not convey then the pure truth. But the same would apply to the first part, if, as Riezler contends, the first part does not contain the full truth: the first part is, to say the least, not very explicit about the unity of opposites in being or in beingness. The relation of the two parts would then not be identical with that of truth and opinion, but their relation would only reflect the relation of truth and opinion. Neither pure truth nor pure opinion would come to full view in the poem; and yet Parmenides makes us expect that they do come into full view in his poem. Perhaps Parmenides did not desire that the expectation should be fulfilled in an obvious manner. Were this suspicion proved correct, the vulgar and traditional interpretation according to which the first part sets forth the full truth and the second part mere opinion, might adequately render what one may call the immediately and universally visible meaning of the poem, and Riezler's interpretation would transcend that meaning in the direction of the hidden and serious meaning without however arriving at it. Here as elsewhere an intransigent return to the surface might be the indispensable condition for progress towards the center.

Riezler's critical metaphysics had claimed to be supported by the phenomenon of History and to articulate that phenomenon in a fundamentally adequate manner. When he turned from critical metaphysics to ontology, he ascribed to ontology the same support

and the same function as he had originally ascribed to critical metaphysics. Hence he was confronted by these two difficulties. 1) There is a tension between the understanding of beingness as timeless law and order and the understanding of beingness as occurrence, between the understanding of beingness as trans-historical and the understanding of beingness as historical. 2) All understanding of beings or the concrete was said to belong to a particular dynamic context or to be itself concrete. Must the same not be true also of the understanding of beingness or concreteness as such? Or can the ontologist be an anonymous observer? If this is impossible, will ontology itself not become involved in the process and therewith become relativized?

Riezler took these questions up in his *Traktat von Schoenen. Zur Ontologie der Kunst* (Treatise of the Beautiful. Towards an ontology of art, 1935). The treatise was meant to prepare a fully developed ontology, but only to prepare it: not the phenomenon of art but the phenomenon of History would have to be the starting point for a comprehensive ontology. The analysis of art is however the most appropriate "prolegomenon to a doctrine of History" because it brings the analyst into the proper mood for his larger task. Art, and not thought or concept, is akin to beingness. Art, and not nature, is the domain of the beautiful. Art, and not religion, expresses man's self affirmation: art is religiousness without gods; it does not need religion whereas religion needs art in order to be truly religion. Last but not least, art is the supreme remedy for the Christianity without God which, as Riezler suspected, limits Heidegger's perspective.

What then is, according to Riezler, the essence of art? Art is expression but in such a way that the expression is somehow the expressed. What is capable of being expressed, is never a thing; things can only be described or denoted; only states of the soul, only what we ourselves are or can be, can be expressed. For instance, the good painting of a stone, as distinguished from a mere copy, brings out those qualities which are possible states of ourselves or possible manners of our being: the bright or the dark, the rugged or the smooth, loneliness or togetherness, and so on; the good painting of a stone brings out the stony which is, though in different ways, both in the stone and in ourselves. More precisely, it expresses, say, loneliness in such a way that togetherness is co-

present with it while on the surface being simply absent. The good work of art lets us see togetherness within loneliness, or hauntedness within serenity, i.e., serenity as a state of a being which can be haunted. Trash or poor art is distinguished from high art by the fact that it does not bring out the co-present opposite of the sweet, the gruesome and so on. When we say of a work of art that it is "alive" we mean precisely that it brings out possible states of the soul as co-present with their absent opposites. Art expresses an in-between of opposites. But it always expresses more than one in-between: it expresses the in-between of many in-betweens. By this very fact it expresses the soul, the texture of the soul, the beingness of the soul, beingness as such. In the work of art beingness itself, the mystery of life, comes to sight or into appearance. This is the reason why the work of art is mysterious, inexhaustible and resplendent. If the work of art makes visible beingness, beingness is as such visible or concealed, and therefore also more or less visible or concealed. Beingness is not indifferent to being visible or concealed; it has a directedness towards coming to sight. A being is, or partakes of beingness, more or less, according to the degree to which beingness is visible in it. The stone as we see it ordinarily, does not reveal beingness—it is just a stone. In the good painting the stone is no longer a stone, i.e., something which we could not possibly be: in the good painting the stone has become visible in its beingness; only in the work of art is the stone truly. A soul is to a higher or to a lower degree, the more or less it is aware of its beingness and therewith of beingness as such; only by being aware of beingness are we truly. Beingness is only if it appears. But beingness appears only in the work of art. Only in the work of art is beingness: only in the expression is the expressed. The unchangeable texture is only as occurrence. Reality is only if it is "seen." Or, as Riezler interpreted the verse of Parmenides: beingness and awareness of beingness belong inseparably together. But since beingness is occurrence, there is no necessity why it should be actually seen, and if it comes to sight, it appears in every case in a different manner, i.e., it is in every case in a different manner.

These suggestions, of which I could barely give the roughest outlines, indicate the direction in which Riezler sought the ground of History: the ground of History is beingness as occurrence. As far as I know, he did not attempt to understand from this point of view the

history or the fate of ontology as he saw it—the appearance of the ontological problem in the beginnings of philosophy, the concealment of the ontological problem by the cosmological problem in the thought of Aristotle, the oblivion of the ontological problem in modern times, and its reappearance in the thought of Heidegger. In regard to the problem of art or of the beautiful Riezler says that the problem is an eternal problem but that it depends upon History whether it is raised and whether it can be raised. Each epoch which is sure of itself, has a specific understanding of what constitutes beauty or artistic excellence; each healthy epoch has a specific style which it regards as the only good style. Only epochs of decay can be fully open to the artistic excellence of all other times and spaces; in such epochs no style can claim any more absolute superiority. Only in an epoch of this kind can the question of what constitutes artistic excellence as such be raised adequately. It is then, as Riezler put it, a present need or predicament which imposes on him the raising of the problem of art. The present need in question is apparently a need which was never felt before: the eternal problem of art has become susceptible of being raised adequately for the first time now, in response to the present predicament. One is therefore compelled to wonder as to whether the relation between the present and unique need and the eternal problem is not a part of the eternal problem itself or in other words whether one can legitimately or strictly speak of an eternal problem. It certainly becomes necessary to reflect on the present need in its unique character. We find such a reflection in Riezler's speech on *Gebundenheit und Freiheit des gegenwaertigen Zeitalters*. There he referred to the relativism or nihilism which were the immediate consequence of the historical consciousness. Opposing this immediate consequence, he inferred from the relativization by the historical consciousness of every known Yes and No the demand for a new Yes and No. Since this demand arose out of the historical consciousness and was informed by the historical consciousness, one is led to expect that the historical consciousness, having reached full self consciousness, will point to a new Yes and No, prepare a new Yes and No, and perhaps even identify it. More precisely, since the historical consciousness is the insight into the root of all Yes's and No's, of all norms or ought's, it is the absolute insight; therefore it would seem that the historical consciousness cannot rest satisfied

merely with a new Yes and No but must point to the absolute Yes and No, the final Yes and No. This would seem to be necessary also for the reason that, as one might think, only the absolute, and not the provisional can bind the conscience. In other words, the historical consciousness if it understands itself would seem to belong to the absolute moment in history and therewith to be beyond the relativity of history. Riezler rejects this line of thought altogether: History is an unfinishable process and therefore it does not allow of an absolute moment, an absolute Yes and No, but only of a new Yes and No. The new Yes and No cannot be found by philosophy but only by an act of History, of life itself. If I understand Riezler's thought correctly, he meant that philosophy cannot do more than to understand human life as historical, as dynamic context, as moving in a space which itself is moving, and therewith to understand the formal character of all possible Yes's and No's, without being able to deduce from this understanding any substantive Yes and No. Philosophy is limited to the task of bringing to light the eternal structure of life or History, "the eternal *humanum*," the immutable form of man's mutability. This is the eternal problem to which philosophy seeks the solution—a solution which, if it is to be adequate, cannot but be an eternal, an eternally valid solution. The eternity of the problem and of the solution does not depend on whether they are eternally accessible or not. Following this line of thought, Riezler was eventually driven to abandon the quest for a new Yes and No in favor of the quest for the immutable or eternal "‘good itself’ which is the measure of all measures." In his *Physics and Reality*, in which he speaks through the mouth of Aristotle, he says: "knowledge of being itself . . . is in itself the end. Its perfection is Being's pure activity, the ultimate Whither through which all ends are ends."

If we are permitted to say that historicism is the view according to which at least all concrete or profound thought essentially belongs to a concrete dynamic context, and that Platonism is the view according to which pure thought, being "anonymous," transcends every dynamic context, we must go on to say that Riezler felt too strongly the difficulties of historicism not to be attracted by Platonism, but that he was too deeply impressed by both art and historical change resolutely to follow Plato. From the point of view of Platonism there can be only one type of classic art. Riezler how-



ever held the view which is much more plausible today that there is classicity not only in Greek art but in Chinese art, medieval art, impressionism, and so on as well. By conceiving of the classic as the artistically excellent, he avoided the childish absurdities of vulgar relativism or historicism. Riezler was far too intelligent and too experienced in things beautiful to believe for a moment that the application of the distinctions between art and trash, between works of higher quality and works of lower quality is "merely subjective," or that the appreciation of artistic quality depends in any significant way on historical or extraneous knowledge. The grasp of "the eternal *humanum*" may not be sufficient for legitimatizing one's preferring one Yes to another Yes or one's preferring, say, classic Greek art to classic medieval art; it may not lead us therefore beyond what one may call a qualified relativism; but it is amply sufficient for revealing fully the unspeakable absurdity of unqualified or vulgar relativism.

The impression of Riezler's thought which we received from his German books is confirmed by his English books, *Physics and Reality* (1940), and *Man: Mutable and Immutable* (1950). There is a very close and very obvious connection between these two books: *Man* begins where *Physics and Reality* ends. The character of *Physics and Reality* is sufficiently indicated by its subtitle: "Lectures of Aristotle on Modern Physics at an International Congress of Scientists, Cambridge, 1940." Riezler makes Aristotle subject the physics of the modern centuries to a radical criticism. Modern physics is in our time manifestly confronted with radical difficulties which one cannot overcome by ascribing to the propositions of physics a merely operational meaning, i.e., by abandoning the original claim of physics that it reveals nature as it is in itself. There is only one way out of the impasse, the way shown by Aristotle. The primary theme of physics is beings in so far as they move or change in time. Such beings are accessible not to modern physics but to the modern physicists as well as to any other human beings: "The nature you talk about as scientists is not the nature you mean when you say 'I am.'" Aristotle approaches the phenomenon of motion or change by never losing sight of, or even by starting from, man's experience and understanding of himself as a being that moves or changes in time. The more precise articulation of this experience and understanding is the function of Riezler's *Man*:

*Mutable and Immutable. The Fundamental Structure of Social Life.*

As is indicated by the full title, the work is devoted to the analysis of man, of human life as radically social, or to the analysis of society or social life as radically human: the core of society is not institutions, interests, or even ideas, but passions and the striving for happiness, *la condition humaine* as occurrence, the heart and its logic, the life of the soul. In the language of the schools one would have to say that Riezler's doctrine of man and of things human is social philosophy as distinguished from political philosophy. His theme is "Society" as "the universe of response, the spontaneous culture" as distinguished from the State which is brought into being by Society for the service of Society. Nor is Society identical with the Nation although Riezler still contends that the complete or comprehensive society is the nation rather than "the doubtful unity of a 'civilization' comprising more than one nation." The Society which supplies the framework for Riezler's analysis of the passions is "the 'idea' of society" or what "any specific group can be" or "the scheme of a relational structure" which articulates "the human elements that in their mutual relationships constitute society as society." "As a scheme it is an abstraction." It abstracts especially from the purposes of society. Riezler opposes in this context the thinking in terms of means and ends and especially the notion that there can be a "single purpose to which everything else is . . . merely a means." From here we can understand why Riezler's social philosophy, as distinguished from the political philosophy of the past, does not contain an ethics proper: his central subject is not virtue and justice, but the passions (or the attitudes or the moods). In accordance with this, he discusses the relation of the I, the Self, which can never become an object, with the Me, i.e., the I as object, without even alluding to the conscience. Riezler is aware of the fact that one must not look at social phenomena in the light of questions or doctrines to which "no society pays any attention." But he does not draw from this the conclusion that social phenomena must be understood primarily in the way in which they come to sight in the perspective of the citizen or statesman. He does not begin at the true beginning of analysis, with the surface. The perspective of Riezler the analyst differs from the outset from the perspective of the citizen or statesman. Opposing "the man-environment scheme" which is the framework accepted by present day

social science, he develops a much more solid and much more fertile scheme: not man confronting his environment of which other human beings as his objects are a part, but a We which constitutes itself by an I and a Thou mutually responding to each other and by distinguishing itself from a They, living "in" its world. Now while "we in our world" is more concrete than the Cartesian Ego which is shut up within "the box of its consciousness," it is nevertheless not more than a correction of the Cartesian starting point: the new starting point is as much a construction as the Cartesian one. The unnatural nouns, "the I," "the Me," "the Thou," "the We," reveal clearly this state of things. Riezler tries to proceed towards the concrete by starting from an abstraction. He thus does not arrive at the concrete. He does not ascend from the phenomena as primarily given to their principles.

The hidden and modified Cartesianism which is underlying the framework employed in *Man* is linked with the fundamental premise of Riezler's thought. That Cartesianism showed itself at the beginning in the monadological conception that was developed in *Gestalt und Gesetz*; for the monad is a transformation of the Cartesian Ego; it is distinguished from the Cartesian Ego especially by its spontaneity. In *Man*, the monad is in its turn transformed into "We in our world." The question guiding Riezler's monadology concerned the essential character of the monad or the essential structure of the life of the monad; it was not the question of what unites the infinitely many monads so that they form the world; this latter question, the question of the *kosmos* was regarded as unanswerable; the *kosmos* remained an x. Riezler's monadology (as distinguished from Leibniz's monadology) takes the place of cosmology, of speculative metaphysics because speculative metaphysics appeared to be impossible. When Riezler replaced monadology by ontology, his fundamental premise remained the same. Riezler stresses the fact that beyond any "world" which as such is the world of a "We," including both the "world" of a possible world society and the "world" of the anonymous observer, there is *the* world, but *the* world remains eternally an x. *The* world is then not the visible whole limited by the visible "starred heaven above me" and the visible firm earth. Heaven and earth and what is between them have lost their contours visible to the eyes of the body or the eyes of the mind, for those contours have been dis-

solved by the acid of modern natural science; and they can acquire visible contours, or "natures," again only by entering, as it were, into any of the many historical worlds: not those visible contours but only the fabric of beingness, and this means primarily the fabric of man's beingness has the dignity of the immutable. In spite of Riezler's appeal from modern physics to Aristotelian physics and from the historicist immersion in mutable man to the immutable in man, modern physics and its twin sister, "the historical consciousness," are the fundamental presuppositions of his ontology.

Yet however doubtful one may be as regards the fundamental premise of Riezler and the framework which he uses for his analyses of the passions and of misery and happiness, this doubt becomes almost irrelevant as soon as one is confronted by these analyses themselves and by the breadth, the earnestness and the delicacy which inform them. These analyses surpass by far everything which is at present attempted within psychology or any other discipline. With a view to the present state of the social sciences, one point needs to be mentioned with emphasis. Just as in earlier thought knowledge of the nature of the soul was seen to lead to knowledge of the right or good activity of the soul, i.e., of the good life, Riezler's understanding of the essential structure of human life leads him in a perfectly legitimate manner to non-arbitrary assertions about what constitutes the good life, about "the order of nature" as distinguished from convention. His analysis of the fundamental structure of society is only "apparently pre-moral." He thus shows that the common belief according to which there is no legitimate way leading from "facts" to "values" has no other basis than a shockingly narrow understanding of "facts." To understand the "fact" of language means to understand the unchangeable principles underlying the distinction between "perfect speech" and speech which is more or less imperfect. To understand the "fact" of laughter means to realize the variety of levels of laughter with the silly laughter of silly people about things which are not ridiculous at the bottom and divine laughter at the top. To understand the "fact" of friendship—a "fact" which is perhaps never fully a "fact"—means to realize the low or degrading character of loveless sex and the narrowness of hate as a passion which "knows no sky." By speaking humanly about the human passions, Riezler lets us see incidentally the powerful reasons why he could

not have been mistaken or misled about the meaning of 1933. His analyses of the passions are also meant as a critique of the "narrow humanity" that informs Heidegger's analysis of *Existenz*; they point to the riddle posed by Heidegger's obstinate silence about love or charity on the one hand, and about laughter and the things which deserved to be laughed at on the other.

Riezler's analysis of the passions culminates in his analysis of shame and awe as respect for the vulnerable and the secret. Human dignity, Riezler suggests among other things, stands and falls by shame and awe because man's greatness is co-present in his littleness and his littleness is co-present in his greatness. It was ultimately because he grasped the meaning of shame and awe that Riezler was a liberal, a lover of privacy. By invading men's privacy one does not come to know them better—one merely ceases to see them. For man's being is revealed by the broad character of his life, his deeds, his works, by what he esteems and reveres not in word but in deed—by the stars for which his soul longs if it longs for any stars. Not anguish but awe is "the fundamental mood" which discloses being as being. Because he was animated by this spirit, he felt more at home in the thought of ancient Greece than in the thought of his time.

In pondering over Riezler's highest aspiration, I had to think more than once of Thucydides—of Thucydides' quiet and manly gentleness which seeks no solace and which looks in freedom, but not in indifference, at the opposites whose unity is hidden; which does not attempt to reduce one opposite to the other; and which regards the higher of the opposites not, as Socrates did, as stronger but as more vulnerable, more delicate than the lower. This is the treasure which Riezler divined, for which he longed and which he tried to bring to light again. We shall honor his memory best if we follow the light which he followed and to which he never ceased pointing.